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Toward an *I Ching* Model of Communication

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Abstract: The paper aims to develop a model of communication based on the thought of *I Ching*. The dialectical and dialogical interaction between *yin* and *yang* serves as the foundation of the model development, which leads to the conceptualization of communication as an interdetermining process in which interactants develop a mutually dependent relationship through the exchange of symbols. The model stipulates five characteristics of human communication: holistic, hierarchical, interconnected, creative, and harmonious. In addition, the holistic and dynamic nature of communication is delineated based on the model from three perspectives: forces of human communication, forms of the movement of human communication, and the outcome of human communication. It is concluded that while a universal model can be used to describe the universal phenomenon of human communication, the *I Ching* model reflects potential differences of value or moral orientations toward communication between Chinese and Westerners. Hence, the model can be used to better understand Chinese behaviors from an emic perspective in the future research. [China Media Research, 2009; 5(3):72-81]

Keywords: *I Ching*, human communication, *yin* and *yang*,

Introduction

As a universal concept, “communication” exists in all human societies. In other words, people in different societies must go through the process of exchanging symbols in order to achieve the goal of mutual understanding. Hence, the development of a universal model or theory of human communication is possible, especially when applied to the explanation of, for example, the existence, nature and components of communication. Nevertheless, while recognizing the fact claimed by scholars that “we cannot not communicate” (Watzlawick, Bravin, & Jackson, 1967), “Communication is symbolic, dynamic, and developmental” (e.g., Chen & Chen, 2005), or “Communication involves elements such as sender, encoding, channel, message, receiver, decoding, feedback, noise, environment, etc.” (e.g., Adler & Rodman, 2006), it is important to know that the way to perceive the concept and to exercise communication activities is subject to the influence of the culture a person lives by (Chen, 2004).

Take one of the universal components of human communication as an example. “Encoding” is a necessary internal process of creating symbols in the sender’s mind before a message can be developed and delivered to the receiver via a channel. However, in the process of encoding, Chinese people are conditioned by their cultural teachings, such as “sincerity in speaking,” “silence is gold,” and “talking much errs much”, and therefore tend to be very cautious in creating symbols. Reflected in the message originated from the encoding process, the amount of self-disclosure is therefore less than Westerners (Chen, 1995), and the quality of the message tends to be more relational and other-oriented (Chang & Holt, 1991; Hwang, 1987). Moreover, the belief of “harmony is a great virtue” also leads the

Chinese to be more restrained, indirect, and less confrontational in the process of feedback (Chen, 2001; Chen & Ma, 2002). All these demonstrate that, from a cultural perspective, it is apparent that different cultural groups possess different communication styles.

The cultural influence on the communication process is then providing a *de facto* rationale for developing a valid model of communication, which can be used to explain interactional behaviors of people from a specific cultural group. In this sense, this kind of emic model of communication is not a universal one any more, although it won’t challenge the universal way of treating communication from a more abstract or etic level. Based on this argument and distinction, this paper attempts to propose a model of communication from the Chinese cultural perspective, specifically based on *I Ching* or the *Book of Changes*. It was assumed that the model can be used to better understand Chinese communication behaviors from a more micro perspective and to compare with the possible universal model of human communication. The characteristics of communication based on the model of *I Ching* first are delineated, followed by the analyses of the holistic and dynamic nature of human communication from the perspectives of communication forces, forms of communication movement, and communication outcomes.

An *I Ching* Model of Human Communication

Bian or change is the key concept of *I Ching*, an ancient collection of Chinese wisdom appeared more than two thousand years ago, and this is why *I Ching* is also called the *Book of Changes*. The concept of change later formed the ontological assumptions of Chinese philosophy and dictated the behaviors of Chinese communication. The dialectical interaction between the two opposite but complementary forces, i.e., *yin* and

yang, is the origin of *bian* or change. Based on *I Ching*, three ontological assumptions were generated to bring continuity into the process of change and to regulate the alteration of *yin* and *yang* (Chai & Chai, 1969; Chen, 2008a). First of all, the universe, including human interaction, is a great whole, in which all is but a transitional process. Second, the transformation of the universe is moving in a cyclic manner. And third, this cyclic transformation of the universe is an on-going, endless process. Thus, all the contradictions in human society will be resolved in this continuously transforming process of the universe.

According to Cheng (1987), the dialectic completion of relative polarities is the end result of the pulling and pushing of *yin* and *yang*. Everything is then a synthetic unity embedded in the mutual functions of

yin and *yang* in different stages of the transformation. The holistic nature of the interaction between *yin* and *yang* represents a totality “to which all things belong and the source from which all things spring forth” (p. 36). The view of the interaction between *yin* and *yang* as the source of life became the framework Chinese people used to explain the rise and fall, the flourishing and decline of human activities (Xiao, 2006). Moreover, a state of dynamic but harmonious balance for the interaction and the transformation of *yin* and *yang* is the key to sustaining life. The lack of harmony infers the absence of the dynamic equilibrium, which results in the failure of human actions (Chen, 1993). Figure 1 shows an *I Ching* model of the interaction between *yin* and *yang* which can be used to represent the process of human communication.

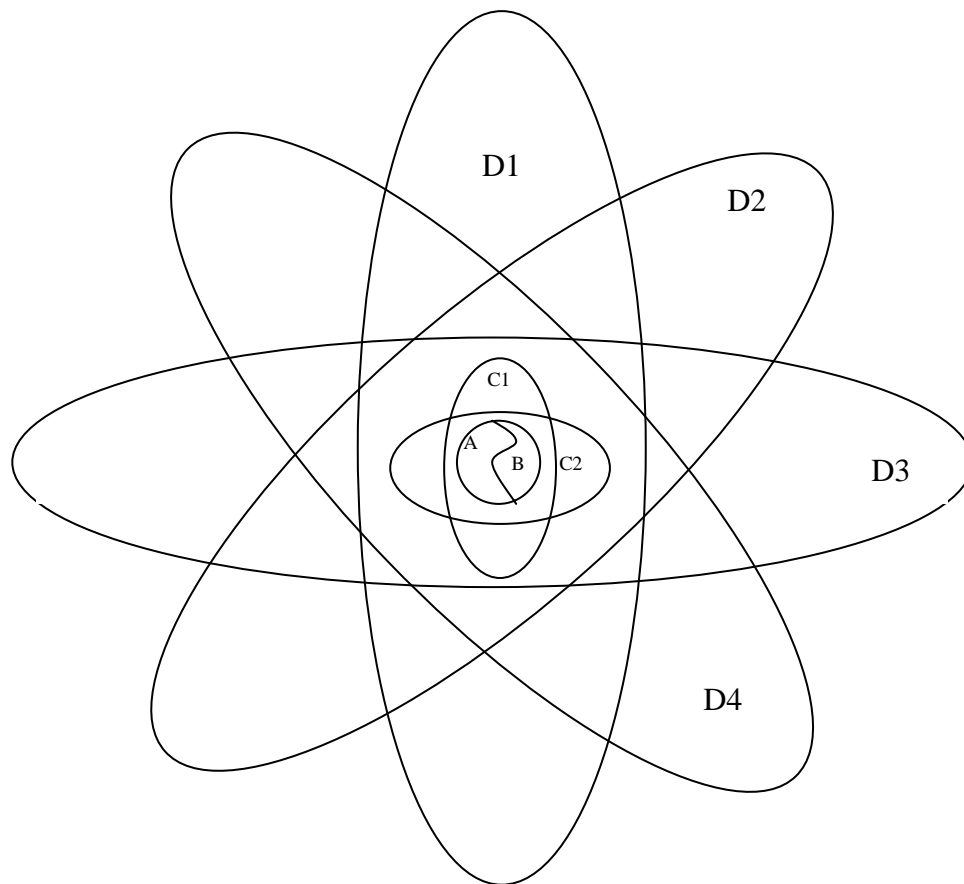


Figure 1. An *I Ching* Model of Human Communication.

Figure I indicates that the progressive direction of the interaction of the two cosmic forces, i.e., *yin* and *yang*, takes the form of continuous cycles and results in the development of human society. The non-ending cyclic transformation implies two important attributes: interconnected creativity and harmonious hierarchy (Chen 2001; Fung, 1983).

Creativity refers to that the movement of the interdetermined *yin* and *yang* is a process of production and reproduction. In other words, change means production and reproduction or what Fang (1981) called “creative creativity” (p. 109). This successive movement of *yin* and *yang* constitutes the Way or Tao, which is manifested in humanity and penetrates all things, and

brings about infinite interpretation, possibility and potentiality of reality. What stirs the state of absolute quietness and inactivity before the interaction of *yin* and *yang* is the function of *gan ying* (i.e., wholehearted responding) embedded in *cheng* (i.e., sincerity). In other words, it is the sincere and honest mind that forms the basis of wholehearted responding between *yin* and *yang*, and unites the two opposite forces in order to emit the continuous production revolving in the interconnected cycles of movement (Wang, 1989; Wu, 1976).

From the perspective of human communication, Xiao and Chen (2009) stipulated that the concept of *gan ying* in *I Ching* is an organic capacity which cultivates interconnection and interaction between two elements. In addition, *gan ying* endows an ethical and spiritual predisposition. It is the sympathy and empathy toward other living beings as a whole, in which an ethically appropriate act and response is required. A harmonious relationship is then established through this symmetrical and congruent communication process; a state of equilibrium is therefore reached.

The hierarchical structure of the interaction between *yin* and *yang* is illustrated in the arrangement of the six lines (*yao*) of each hexagram in *I Ching*. The movement required from the bottom line up to the top line dictates the principle and patterns of change or alternation. According to Chen (2008a),

The first or the bottom line indicates the foundation of change; the second line is the sprouting period, which indicates the formation of a change of things; the third line is the embodiment indicating the concretizing stage of change; the fourth line is like the leaves of a tree, indicating the strong growth of change; the fifth line is the blooming period, indicating the flourishing of change; and the sixth or top line is the fruit, indicating the fullness of change, which implies a stage of transformation to another cycle. (p. 8)

The movement implies an orderly, rather than chaotic, dynamic process for the interaction of *yin* and *yang*. Two patterns of the hierarchical relationship are produced from the interaction of the six lines, each with a *yin* or *yang* attribute: distant responding and close neighboring (Li, 1987).

Distant responding refers to the connection of lines between the first and the fourth, the second and the fifth,

and the third and the sixth. A positive responding emerges if one of the interconnected lines is of *yin* attribute and the other is *yang*; negative or null responding happens when both lines are with *yin* attribute or with *yang* attribute. A positive responding is said to produce the effect of attractiveness, while negative responding results in a mutual exclusion.

Close neighboring is the relationship formed between the two lines next to each other. The one on the top is called the “driving” line, and the one below is the “receptive” line. It is a good sign if the driving line is *yang* (representing the dominant force) and the receptive line is *yin* (representing the submissive force); a bad luck appears if the *yin* line drives over the *yang* line. A mutual exclusiveness becomes evident if both lines are with *yin* attribute or are with *yang* attribute (Xu, 1991).

According to *I Ching*, the stability of hierarchical relationships based on the mutually dynamic interaction among the six lines is dictated by the three elements rooted in the hexagram: *shi* (temporal contingencies), *wei* (spatial contingencies), and *ji* (the imperceptible beginning of change) (see Chen, 2008b; Wilhelm, 1990). In other words, a harmoniously hierarchical network of relationship is a function of recognizing the trace of change (i.e., *ji*) and knowing the right time (i.e., *shi*) to behave appropriately in a specific context with proper attributes (i.e., *wei*). The web woven by *shi*, *wei*, and *ji* provides a field in which Chinese people construct the reality of their behaviors and make sense of their daily lives.

Five characteristics of human communication can be summarized from the above discussion of *I Ching* imbued in the model of Figure 1: holistic, hierarchical, interconnected, creative, and harmonious.

First, human communication is a holistic system. The holistic system is formed by the dynamic, dialectical interaction between *yin* and *yang* (represented by B and A in the model). Although *yin* (and *yang*) itself is a system in which its own force generates an internal transforming process, *I Ching* claims that *yin* alone won't produce and *yang* alone won't grow. In other words, without the interaction between the two opposite forces of *yin* and *yang*, a holistic system, illustrated by *tai chi* in which the dark area represents *yin* and white *yang* (see figure 2), cannot be developed.



Figure 2. The *tai chi* model

Second, human communication is creative. The holistic system of human communication is developed through an endless process of production and reproduction of the interaction between *yin* and *yang*, hence human communication is a suprasystem which contains different layers of subsystems (e.g., A, B, C1, C2, D1-D4 in the model).

Third, human communication is interconnected. All the subsystems within the model contain both *yin* and *yang* components, thus, they are interconnected, interdependent, interfused, interpenetrated, and interdetermined.

Fourth, human communication is hierarchical. The interconnection of components within the holistic system of human communication is based on the hierarchical structure of the relationship, which is confined by temporal and spatial contingencies.

Finally, human communication is harmonious. Harmony is the ultimate goal of Chinese communication (Chen, 2002; Chen & Chung, 1994). The dialectical interaction between *yin* and *yang* aims to reach a state of dynamic equilibrium, in which harmony is treated as the end rather a means of human communication. Therefore, all the contractions should be resolved in the process of communication.

The following section further delineates of the dynamic nature of human communication from the perspective of *I Ching* model.

The Dynamic Nature of Human Communication

I Ching prescribes that change is the fundamental principle of the universe. Human communication is a dynamic process in which the interactants endeavor to reach a harmonious equilibrium through a dialectical, endless, and cyclic transformation. The holistic harmony originated from the interfusion and interpenetration of the two interactants reveals an orderly, developmental nature of human communication, through which things are disclosed, affairs are completed, and goals are achieved.

In other words, only through the dynamic process of human interaction can the trace and track of a movement be detected through learning and observation. It is through this process of communication that a possibility is open for individuals to regulate the change by bringing in continuity and stability, so that “a proper space for the self can be established, the value of life can be developed, the meaning of living can be unfolded, and therefore a human being can be parallel and integrated with heaven and earth as the three sides of a triangle” (Chen, 2008a, p. 8). This dynamic nature of human communication based on the concept of change of *I Ching* can be illustrated from three aspects: its forces, its forms, and its outcome.

Forces of Human Communication

The endless cyclic transformation of human interaction is built on the pushing and pulling between the two primal forces: “straight up” movement and “square” movement. The former represents a force that is moving upright as a straight line, and the latter a force moving in the direction of a “square” that forms an open space (see Figure 3). According to Wilhelm (1990), in *I Ching*, the straight up movement resembles the *chian* trigram, symbolized by a solid or unbroken line, the pure *yang*, or the creative and strong heaven (as A in Figure 1 or the white side in Figure 2), which moves up without interruption like the endless extension of time and produces the quality of change; the square movement resembles the *kun* trigram, symbolized by divided lines, the pure *yin*, or the receptive and capacious earth (as B in Figure 1 or the dark side in Figure 2), which moves around in a square shape without interruption like the endless expansion of space and produces the quantity of change. Thus, the synthetic unity of the two different attributes of “straight up” movement and “square” movement, time and space, or quality and quantity, forms a continuous cyclic movement to complete the reality or ontological existence of human communication.









Trigram								
Name	Qian	Dui	Li	Xun	Zhen	Kan	Gen	Kun
Symbol	heaven	lake	fire	wind	thunder	water	mountain	earth
Force		O	／	^	—	M	└	┐
Direction	straight	circular	oblique	pointed	flat	curve	dilatory	square
Movement	opening	centrifugal	centripetal	radiating	waving	falling	concentrating	closing
Attribute	creative	circular	clinging	penetrating	arousal	abysmal	dilatory	receptive

Figure 3. Nature of the eight trigrams and forces.

The organic combination and integration of the two primal forces produces and reproduces six more trigrams, indicating six different forces: *zhen*, *kan*, *gen*, *xun*, *li*, and *dui*. The rolling, forwarding left or right movement resembles the *zhen* trigram, symbolized by the combination of one solid and two divided lines, the arousing thunder; the revolving curve movement resembles the *kan* trigram, symbolized by the combination of one solid and two divided lines, the abyssal running water; the flattening, delaying movement resembles the *gen* trigram, symbolized by the combination of one solid and two divided lines, the dilatory mountain; the pointed, specific-directed movement resembles the *xun* trigram, symbolized by the combination of two solid and one divided lines, the penetrating wind; the all-embracing oblique movement resembles the *li* trigram, symbolized by the combination of two solid and one divided lines, the clinging fire; and the going around movement resembles the *dui* trigram, symbolized by the combination of two solid and one divided lines, the circulating lake. Figure 3 shows the nature of the eight trigrams and forces.

Together, the eight forces of change representing the eight trigrams systematically form the laws of change specified in *I Ching* (Wang, 1983). The continuous dialectical interaction and combination of the eight forces produces infinite patterns of human communication.

Forms of the Transformation of Human Communication

As a dynamic process, the movement or transformation of human interaction can be classified into four categories: substance, velocity, unification, and opposition. Each category consists of two kinds of change.

First, the transformation on substance includes quantity change and quality change. The quantity change refers to the switch of temporal and spatial contingencies of the interaction, and the quality change refers to the change of the nature of interaction caused by the impact of quantity change. As demonstrated by the process of self-disclosure during the interaction, the alternation of the degree of the five dimensions of self-disclosure identified by Wheelless (1978) displays the quantity change of the interaction.

The variation of the quantity of self disclosure inevitably results in the quality change of human communication, which can be exemplified by Altman and Taylor's (1973) Social Penetration model. According to the model, the quality or nature of human relationship is subject to change based on the breadth and depth of self-disclosure. For instance, a causal relationship may be developed on the basis of the breadth, rather than the depth, of self-disclosure; while an intimate relationship requires a higher degree of both breadth and depth of the self-disclosure. Applying to the level of organizational communication, as Chen (2008a) pointed out, the quality change can also be demonstrated by the adoption of a new management system for improving the organization's performance; the movement would usually lead to the change of the nature of leadership and management in the organization.

Second, the transformation on velocity refers to the variation of the speed or the rate of motion reflected in the developmental or on-going process of human communication. It is comprised of gradual change and sudden change. As human beings, we strive to fulfill three kinds of social needs, i.e., inclusion, control, and affection, through the process of communication

(Schutz, 1966). The goal of being included, gaining control, and building a relationship is achieved based on a gradual movement of the quantity and quality of interaction. The gradual change represents an evolutionary process of the accumulation of every step of an action in the matrix of time and space.

As Devito (2008) pointed out, interpersonal relationship is developed from the initial contact stage, to involvement stage, intimacy stage, deterioration stage, and finally dissolution stage. In a more detailed analysis, Adman and Rodman (2006) mentioned that the development of human relationship is established in ten gradual stages, including initiating, experimenting, intensifying, integrating, bonding, differentiating, circumscribing, stagnating, avoiding, and terminating. Within each stage, the slow and gradual movement of the nature of the relationship as well manifests. For example, showing withdrawal, decline in self-disclosure, deception, and evaluating behaviors all demonstrate the sign of gradual change in the process of interaction (Devito, 2008). Hence, the various signs revealed before the final dissolution stage are the functions of gradual change of communication.

When the gradual change reaches its saturation level the acceleration of the movement in the process of communication will appear, which usually leads to a revolutionary or sudden change. In other words, the sudden change happens when the magnitude of the accumulative forces produces a thrust power that results in the emergence of a new system in a quick pace. The new system represents the death of the old one and therefore provides an opportunity for renewal. In human communication, when the relationship is gradually developed to the deterioration or avoiding stage, the velocity based on the collective forces of the movement of previous stages as a final thrust brings the relationship to the terminating or dissolution stage, in which the end of the relationship plants a seed for a new relationship to germinate. As indicated in *ge* hexagram in *I Ching*, when the views of two interactants bar mutual understanding from each other, it means that the two interactants are in an incompatible situation, like the mixture of water and fire. A revolutionary movement or sudden change becomes an inevitable consequence for the interaction.

Third, the transformation toward unification delineates two kinds of change in a stable state of harmony: great union (*bo he*) and great harmony (*tai he*). The unification of change is the state of equilibrium formed by the coordinating and interdetermining communication of the two interactants, harmony is the product of this dialectical balance. According to *I Ching*, in the state of equilibrium, the interactants receive their own true nature and destiny and come into a permanent accord with each other.

Chen (2008a) indicated that, based on *I Ching*,

“Great Union represents the state of balance being preserved in a stable condition and Great Harmony is the foundation for the flowing of heaven and earth in the stable state of Great Union” (p. 13). In other words, Great Union is a state of static balance between *yin* and *yang*, which provides a foundation for Great Harmony to keep moving forward and “develop its course in a symmetrical and congruent condition” (p. 13). Equilibrium is the ideal state of change, in which Great Harmony becomes the ultimate goal of human communication. Moreover, the equilibrium of Great Harmony symbolizes a totality that can only be understood from the dialectical interrelationships among the interactants, and this dialectical interrelationship is an infinite process, through which contradictions are harmoniously interplayed, so that, as Wang (1957) argued, it can be treated as a state of being free from contradictions. This is called the state of *zhong* (centrality), specified in *I Ching*, which forms the cardinal thought of Chinese culture (Cao, 1986; Wang, 1970; Xiao, 2003).

As the goal of human communication aims to reach, “competence” can be conceptualized as the change towards unification of contradictions. Scholars have identified appropriateness and effectiveness as the two sides of the communication coin (e.g., Chen & Starosta, 1996; Wiemann, 1977). Appropriateness lays down a stable interconnected network, and effectiveness requires the interactant to excise communication skills in this holistic system to unify the oppositions. Appropriateness resembles Great Union and the integration of appropriateness and effectiveness is the Great Harmony. Thus, competence is the equilibrium state of human communication.

Finally, the transformation toward opposition has two types: negation and negation of the negation. Negation is the change of the resolution to a problem. *I Ching* stipulated that negation is a decision in a stagnant situation to move into the next stage that shows a positive outcome in the developmental process of change. The conflict caused by the incompatible needs of the interactants is resolved in the process of communication is an example of negation. It represents a transformation from opposition to fellowship. The movement of negation reveals a fact that through the process of communication even when the encountering is most difficult, people can plant the seed for a new situation or resolution to emerge with the capacity of adapting and cultivation of the proper attitude toward the contradiction (Wilhelm, 1979). Negation is a linear change from point A to point B, which doesn't infer a repeating move, but instead indicates a permanent change of the system in terms of quantity and quality.

Negation of the negation is a continuous progress of the movement of negation. It refers to the resolution or movement from a positive state to a negative one or

from opposition to fellowship and return to opposition again. As *I Ching* specified, change refers to the process of production and reproduction, as the dark begets the light and vice versa in a ceaseless movement of alternation, and through this spiral process of endless alternation, continuity and duration are then achieved. This spiraling process doesn't refer to a mechanic repeating cycle from fellowship to opposition, but indicates that the recurrence of phenomena is never repeated in an identical form. Negation of the negation, characterized by the absence of identical repetition in a spiral movement, gives the change an opportunity to avoid a vicious cycle of the movement and reach a state of dialectical equilibrium between opposition and fellowship (Wang, 1970).

As demonstrated in Chen's (1998) *I Ching* model of Chinese relationship development, after the relationship reaches the abysmal stage, it will move into

the stage of stillness or stagnation and provides an opportunity for activating the change of negation. At this point, the relationship will either move to the direction of rebuilding a new relationship with the same person or renew a relationship with another partner. Either way refers to another cycle, with a sense of the spiral movement, of relationship development, and then reaches another point of stagnation for a new round of the negation. Although the continuous spiral movement of opposition-fellowship-opposition reflects an up and down transformation, *I Ching* did give this continuous negations a positive sense by trying to prolong the time span and expand the field of the fellowship. In other words, the goal of human communication is to *ci ying bao tai* (to perpetuate good fortune) or to maximize the state of equilibrium based on Great Harmony. Figure 4 summarizes the forms of the transformation of human communication.

Transformation of Human Communication							
Substance		Velocity		Unification		Opposition	
Quantity Change	Quality Change	Gradual Change	Sudden Change	Great Union	Great Harmony	Negation	Negation of the Negation
The switch of temporal and spatial contingencies of the interaction	The change of the nature of interaction	The change in an evolutionary sense	The change in a revolutionary sense	A state of static balance between <i>yin</i> and <i>yang</i>	A state of dynamic equilibrium between <i>yin</i> and <i>yang</i>	The change of the resolution to a problem	A continuous progress of the movement of negation

Figure 4. Forms of the transformation of human communication.

Outcome of Human Communication

Any action in the process of interaction is a cause that will lead to an effect. The antecedence-consequence movement represents the outcome of human communication. The phenomenon of *gan ying* embedded in sincerity previously mentioned illustrates an example of a positive causation in interaction. Thus, in the different stages of interaction the dialectical exchanges between the two parties produce a series of outcomes. According to *I Ching*, the outcome of interaction can fall in either a positive or negative direction. The end of positive effect symbolizes good

fortune (*ji*) and the end of negative effect symbolizes misfortune (*xiong*).

For instance, Knapp and Vangelisti (1992) concluded that coming together and coming apart are the two outcomes of the development of human relationship ingrained in the process of communication. Coming together, through the steps of gradual change from initiating, experimenting, intensifying, integrating, and bonding, describes the positive outcome of human relationship; coming apart, through the steps of gradual change from differentiating, circumscribing, stagnating, avoiding, and terminating, describes the negative

outcome of human relationship. As indicated in *I Ching*, the direction of good fortune, i.e., the positive outcome of human communication, is moving from no blame (*wu jiu*), success (*heng*), to furthering (*li*); the direction of misfortune, i.e., the negative outcome, is moving from remorse (*hui*), humiliation (*lin*), to danger (*li*) (Chen, 2008a). Good fortune is the image of gain, and misfortune is the image of loss in human communication.

Then, how can people perpetuate the ideal state of good fortune or the equilibrium of human communication? In other words, how can an interactant successfully regulate the change in order to bring in continuity in the dynamic process of communication? Or, to put it another way, by what means can an individual reach communication competence defined by *I Ching*? *Zhong dao* is the answer. *I Ching* specifies *zhong dao* or the way of mean as the guidepost of human communication. According to Cheng (1983) and Tseng (1986), *zhong dao* is the way of being appropriate and effective in the communication process. It provides interactants with the ability to detect the trace of a movement (*ji*) in order to act at the appropriate time (*shi*) in a specific context (*wei*) of interaction (Chen, 2008b). As previously indicated, communication competence from the Chinese perspective is the function of *shi* (temporal contingencies), *wei* (spatial contingencies), and *ji* (the imperceptible beginning of change). Furthermore, Chen (2002) pointed out that the Chinese communication competence based on *I Ching* is manifested in five communication behaviors, including emotional control, avoidance of aggressive behaviors, avoidance of saying "no," face saving, and the emphasis of particularistic relationships.

Conclusion

Communication is a universal phenomenon of human beings. As a symbolic, dynamic and developmental process, communication realizes human activities and existence, thus a universal model of human communication is attainable. Nevertheless, the impact of culture leads people of different groups to behave differently in the process of communication, thus, even if the phenomenon of human interaction is universal, a model of communication based on a specific culture is as well necessary for better understanding communication behaviors of the people in that specific cultural group. It is on this basis, this paper recognizes the reality of having a universal model of human communication, while at the same time attempts to generate a model of communication based on *I Ching*, which can be used to better explain the communication behaviors of Chinese people.

Five characteristics of the *I Ching* model of communication are stipulated, including holistic, hierarchical, interconnected, creative, and harmonious. All these characteristics are governed by the dynamic

nature of human communication, through which individuals endeavor to reach a harmonious equilibrium embedded in the dialectical, endless, and cyclic transformation. This dynamic transformation or change of human communication is produced by the interaction of the two opposite but complementary primal forces of the universe, i.e., *yin* and *yang*, that in turn reproduces six more forces of *zhen*, *kan*, *gen*, *xun*, *li*, and *dui*. Together, the eight forces form the laws of change of human communication specified in *I Ching*, and the continuous dialectical interaction and the combination of the eight forces produce infinite patterns of human communication.

The interaction of the eight forces of change results in four categories of change, with two types in each category, in the process of human communication: (1) change on substance: quantity change and quality changes, (2) change on velocity: gradual change and sudden change, (3) change toward unification: Great Union and Great Harmony, and (4) change toward opposition: negation and negation of the negation. Every change in the process of human communication represents a cause leading to an effect, which illustrates the outcome of interaction. *I Ching* indicates that the outcome of human communication can fall in either positive or negative direction. The positive outcome of human communication, symbolized by good fortune, is moving from no blame (*wu jiu*), success (*heng*), to furthering (*li*); the negative outcome, symbolized by misfortune, is moving from remorse (*hui*), humiliation (*lin*), to danger (*li*). The goal of human communication based on *I Ching* is to perpetuate the ideal state of good fortune or equilibrium through the appropriate and effective management of the imperceptible beginning of change (*ji*), temporal contingencies (*shi*), and spatial contingencies (*wei*).

In conclusion, in addition to a universal model which can be used to describe the phenomenon of human communication, this paper shows that the *I Ching* model of human communication can be used to better understand Chinese behaviors from an emic perspective. The model reflects potential differences of value or moral orientations toward communication between Chinese and Westerners. Future research can more systematically examine those differences due to the influence of culture. Finally, future research can also go one step further to apply the *I Ching* model of human communication to investigate key concepts of interaction, such as relationship development and communication competence, to better demystify communication differences between cultures and enrich the literature of human communication study.

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